



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION, WEST VALLEY CITIES AND ARIZONA BUSINESSES STAND UP TO POLITICAL INTIMIDATION TACTICS

Lawsuit Demands That Governor, Attorney General Cease Politicizing Regulatory Process

SELLS, Ariz. – Today, the Tohono O'odham Nation has asked a federal court to instruct the Arizona Department of Gaming (ADG) to quit playing politics with the Nation's West Valley Project and the thousands of jobs it is creating. West Valley cities and Arizona businesses have also taken up this fight, participating in the lawsuit by providing declarations confirming the damage ADG's actions are causing their communities and businesses. The lawsuit names Governor Ducey, Attorney General Brnovich, and ADG Director Daniel Bergin as defendants, and requests an emergency injunction against ADG's use of unprecedented intimidation tactics against businesses and individuals who wish to work with the Nation's West Valley Resort.

ADG is ignoring its clear obligations under federal law despite the fact that a federal district court has already ruled that the Nation's project is fully authorized by the Compact. Last February, ADG's attorney confirmed that ADG would follow the Court's decision and work with the Nation to provide the required certifications, but subsequent political pressure from Governor Doug Ducey and Attorney General Mark Brnovich caused ADG to reverse course and refuse to provide certifications for "Class III" gaming vendors and employees. ADG's subservience to this political pressure, especially given the previous federal decisions confirming the Nation's right to open the West Valley Resort, calls into question whether it is truly an independent regulatory agency or just a political shell for the Governor.

In an unprecedented abuse of power, ADG has threatened action against Arizona businesses and workers if they work in the West Valley casino when it opens. In a thinly-veiled letter, ADG has threatened prospective businesses and employees with loss of their certification if they work with the West Valley Resort. With the creation of thousands of new jobs at stake, several businesses, employees and the Cities of Glendale and Tolleson have weighed in with declarations opposing the State's heavy-handed intimidation tactics.

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Edward Manuel said *"In defying federal law and a District Court ruling, ADG and the Governor have blatantly exceeded their authority. Construction of the Nation's casino has been underway for ten months and this extreme political effort to stop this important project cannot be allowed. Arizona communities, businesses and workers support this project and the Nation remains committed to making sure it moves forward."* Chairman Manuel added, *"The irony here is that in their effort to try to stop this project, the State originally accused the Nation of violating our Compact. Now that a federal court has confirmed that the Compact allows the Nation to operate the West Valley Resort, the State refuses to abide by that decision."*

This is the latest in a string of politically-driven attempts to delay this important economic development project. Sixteen straight decisions by courts and federal agencies have supported the Nation's right to move forward. After receiving full approval to move forward, the Nation broke ground on its gaming facility last August and is moving toward completion and opening later this year. The Nation is already investing more than \$200 million into construction this year, and more than 50 companies and 1,300 workers are being retained with the project.

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